

Financing Rural Tourism and Agrotourism in the Danube Delta

Oana Oprișan

"Ovidius" University of Constanta, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Romania

oana.oprisan@yahoo.com

Ana-Maria Dumitrache (Serbanescu)

The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Business Administration, Romania

a.mariadumitrache@yahoo.com

Corina Aurora Marin (Barbu)

The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Doctoral School of Management, Romania

coribaru@yahoo.com

Abstract

Tourism superiorly capitalizes on the natural and anthropic potential of a country, continuously enriching them, satisfying multiple human motivations. It has a multiplier effect, introducing in the economic circuit unique aspects such as: landscape (for the "consumption" of which it is necessary to travel on the spot), hospitality, solicitude and information (geographical, cultural-historical, gastronomic, artistic, etc.). By carrying out this paper we want to highlight an overview of the various financing schemes available.

The purpose of this paper is to show that not only funding schemes are available, but also various programs in which tourism businesses can participate and receive funding. After exploring the funding jungle, we selected the eight most important European funds and programs, which seem to be "exploitable" for cultural tourism in rural areas.

Key words: rural tourism, agrotourism, internal financing, external financing

J.E.L. classification: G3

1. Introduction

The emergence of tourism, as well as other services, has a historical character. Services as a whole were established in a sector of the economy, late, only in our century, and tourism was not one of the first services to appear. The emergence of classical and late tourism, in the last thirty years, of rural tourism and agrotourism, as mass phenomena, is related to the creation of economic and social conditions.

World Tourism Organization and other European organizations define rural tourism as a form of tourism, which includes any tourist activity organized and led in rural areas by the local population, capitalizing on local tourism resources (natural, cultural-historical, human), as well as and facilities, tourist structures, including guesthouses and agritourism farms.

The practice of agrotourism expanded more and more in the second half of the twentieth century, in almost the entire European continent. The search for the rural environment, for rest and recreation is a general trend in the world practice of current tourism. In the countries of the European Union, agrotourism is not a new phenomenon. The new, in this field, is manifested by the expansion of the tourist phenomenon in the rural area. In the future, the countries of the European Union will include tourism in local development policies, under the specific name of rural tourism. Tourism activities can economically revitalize villages. Our research aimed at promoting and capitalizing on tourism and agrotourism in the Danube Delta, and highlighted the importance that tourism, with all its forms of manifestation, has on the socio-economic and cultural-spiritual development of the studied communes, especially on the Tulcea county, in general.

Trends in tourism are constantly changing and there is a need to create new criteria for the middle class tourist, which is much more difficult to meet through basic services.

In the structure of tourist traffic, depending on the motivation of travel, in international tourism practice and more recently, even in Romania, there have been important changes, mainly in terms of diversifying travel objectives and changing priorities in the top preferences of tourists. These transformations have led to the emergence of new forms of holiday spending, to the enrichment of the content of the existing ones with new aspects, to their re-ranking in the structure of the tourist offer.

In recent decades new forms of tourism have also become popular, also known as tourism segments, which are quite numerous.

Thus we can list: agrotourism - tourism on farms that support local agriculture; cultural tourism - visiting cities or historical places and studying their cultural heritage; eco-tourism - clean ecological tourism, which has a minimal impact on the environment; adventure tourism - tourism in hard to reach places or adventure sports, such as mountaineering and pedestrian tourism; genealogical tourism, undertaken in order to discover ancestors and visit places of origin and sometimes to get acquainted with distant relatives; couch tourism and virtual tourism through the internet, books, television, etc .; audio tourism includes audio guides and other forms of such tourism, such as audio tours of museums and audio guides; opera tourism - visiting opera performances and concerts; educational tourism - visiting institutions to gain knowledge by interests, such as cooking classes led by famous chefs or classes for handicrafts; extreme tourism - tourism associated with a higher risk; gambling tourism - visiting gambling establishments; botanical tourism - visiting the famous botanical gardens; curative tourism - leaving cities to get rid of stress, relax in the sun, etc .; hobby-tourism - individual or group tourism, to meet; tourism for people with disabilities or invalids; pop-cultural tourism - visiting the places present in a movie or a book; permanent tourism - wealthy people on permanent leave, some of them, in connection with taxes, in order not to be a citizen of a country; religious or pilgrimage tourism - pilgrimage to the ancient holy places; solo-tourism - trips made by oneself; sports tourism - alpine skiing, golf and diving are the most popular means to spend the holidays; cosmic or space tourism.

Tourism is an area that encourages private initiative and also prepares a workforce with a high degree of adaptability to change. The tourism sector represents over 5% of GDP, providing jobs in the European Union for 12 to 14 million people.

2. Theoretical background

In the Nomenclature of branches of the national economy, are included along with other services and those of domestic and international tourism, leisure, accommodation, transport and public catering, thus highlighting the existence of tourism as a distinct component in the tertiary sector, its activities being characterized through legalities not found in other component branches of the tertiary sector (Gogonea, 2005).

Philip Kotler in his work "Marketing Management" distinguishes four characteristic features of services, namely:

- Intangibility. The services are intangible. Unlike material goods, they cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard or smelled before being bought.
- Inseparability. Unlike material goods which are manufactured, inventoried, stored, distributed successively by several intermediaries and consumed later, it is characteristic of services that their production and consumption take place simultaneously.
- Variability. Services have a high degree of variability, they depend on who, where and when they provide them. Service consumers perceive this variability, seek to obtain as much information as possible about the quality of services, and discuss with other people before choosing one provider or another.
- Perishability. Tourist services cannot be stored. Unlike the material goods that can be preserved and capitalized in a future period, the tourist services, with an important content of human labor, are not subject to preservation.

- Lack of property. When consumers purchase a tangible good, for example, a car or a computer, they have personal access to the product for an unlimited period of time (Kotler *et al.*, 1998). In reality, they own the product and can sell it when they no longer need it. However, the services lack these properties, and the service consumer has access to that service for a limited period of time. Spending a holiday in a tourist resort remains a memory, unlike a tangible good, which remains at the disposal of the buyer.

Due to lack of ownership, service providers have to make special efforts to refresh the brand identity in relations with consumers (Palmer, 1994).

The role of tourism and implicitly that of agrotourism in the economy is reflected in two ways (Turcu and Weisy, 2008):

- a direct economic role of tourism which is highlighted by four elements: the contribution of tourism to GDP growth; the contribution of international tourism to balancing the trade balance of payments; the contribution of tourism to the capitalization of some types of natural and anthropic tourist resources; the contribution of tourism to the increase of the prosperity of the areas where tourism develops;
- an indirect economic role of tourism is given by the fact that the development of tourism also determines the development of other branches of the economy.

From the range of concepts and tools developed by J.M. Keynes ("General theory of labor use, interest and money", published in 1936), the most useful in international macroeconomics have proved to be those gathered in the mechanism of the multiplier, which allows the description and evaluation of the internality of training effects. or de-training propagated through foreign trade channels. The applicability of the training effect on the tourist activity refers to the correlation that exists between this activity and the structure of demand and consumption (as parts of the tourist market).

The tourism offer also consists of specific tourist goods and services, but most of it consists of products that also serve other consumptions: transport and communications, restaurant, food, clothing, general leisure, financial and insurance services, health etc. All these consumptions generate direct incomes through the expenses made in hotels, restaurants, indirect incomes generated by the successive transactions between companies through the tourist consumption and induced incomes, by increasing the consumption of those who earn from tourism. The main fields of activity involved in the development of tourism are: construction, craft industry, transport and agriculture.

Tourism can be an important factor in the integration of countries in world trade and in the international circuit of values through the highly attractive nature of the consumption it generates.

The impact of tourism on the sectors of the economy of an area is divided in effects of multiplication and stimulation in terms of production, income and employment (Drăghici, 2010).

These entraining flows represent the multiplier principle, customized for tourism by François Vellas through four types of multiplications: the multiplication of sales, representing the surplus of turnover in direct, indirect and induced transactions, caused by an additional tourist expense; multiplication of production, representing the increase of production, including the increase registered at the level of capital: hotels, restaurants, parks, etc .; the multiplication of the receipts, consisting in the incomes generated by the increase of the tourist expenses; multiplication of jobs, representing the increase of labor demand due to tourism activities.

3. Research methodology

The affiliation of tourism to the services sector derives from the way of achieving some of its defining features such as mobility, dynamism or ability to adapt to the requirements of each tourist, as well as the particularities of the tourist product, because it is the result of a harmonious combination of services. and own mechanisms of use.

In the elaboration of the paper, statistical data collected from the specialized literature (INS, FAOSTAT, WORLD BANK, DDBRA, ANT, specialized magazines, university courses, etc.) and data collected by applying the questionnaire were used.

The system of indicators used in the measurement and evaluation of the tourist activity must provide information regarding: the tourist demand, by measuring the domestic and international tourist circulation within the national territory; the tourist offer, evaluated by the economic potential of the material base and of the human resources; the value results of the tourist activity, evaluated by estimating the expenses, the receipts, the profit and the economic efficiency; the quality of the tourism services provided.

4. Rural tourism and agrotourism

Rural tourism is one of the most effective solutions to harmonize the requirements of tourism with the requirements of environmental protection and sustainable development. Rural tourism is not entirely new, but it is asserting itself more, starting with the 1970s. Compared to the classic tourism, it is significantly different in terms of delimiting the space, characteristics and content of the holidays.

Motivated, in general, by the desire to return to nature, to life and traditional customs, rural tourism is defined, in a broad sense, by spending holidays in rural areas.

In a report by L.A. Dernoï for the FAO Working Group on Agricultural Structures and the Rationalization of Agricultural Holdings, on the situation of rural tourism in Europe, at the beginning of the years (Dernoï, 1983), focuses in particular on the agrotourism he calls ("different tourism"), which he defines as a type of tourism in which the "client" is hosted in his host's house or in the vicinity and possibly benefits from other services and facilities offered within the holding. Perhaps this is the essential difference between the classic tourism also called "commercial" and agrotourism, although the two forms of tourism also differ in other characteristics. In the usual practice, for the designation of the holidays spent in the rural area, the notions of rural tourism and agrotourism are used. The two concepts overlap in a certain proportion, they have a common denominator, but also particular elements.

In general, it is accepted that the scope of rural tourism is wider and the content of activities is defined in general terms. Thus, rural tourism refers to all activities occasioned by spending a certain period of time in rural areas, the means of accommodation can be both the farm-pension, agritourism farm, and more general tourist equipment: inns, hotels, stops.

5. Forms of rural tourism

The tourist product is considered to be the result of associations, interdependencies between the attractiveness of an area (resources) and the facilities (services) offered to the buyer. Thus, the resources will take the form of different products only through the provision of specific services (accommodation, food, transport, leisure). From here, the special importance of the services emerges, the fact that in the creation (production), and, especially, in the individualization of the tourist products, the emphasis falls on services. Moreover, world experience has shown that the existence of a valuable tourist heritage does not necessarily mean a developed tourism, that exceptional resources can remain outside the economic circuit, in the absence of services that enhance them, make them accessible to tourists.

These few considerations show that the services represent, in a certain sense, the dominant and determining component of the tourist offer, the flexible part of the complex of activities, the most dynamic element, and their characteristics are found, in specific forms, in the whole activity (Păunescu, 1986).

Two main categories of services are characteristic in the travel and tourism industry: services related to travel (travel itself) and services provided at the place of stay (Iarca (Stanescu), 2007).

Rural tourism and agrotourism have a broad motivational basis, represented by: return to nature; knowledge of tradition and culture, of the creation of different rural communities; health care; practicing sports - hunting, fishing, climbing, etc. ; consumption of fresh food and fruit.

All these motivations are reflected in the variety of forms of manifestation. Rural tourism responds to a diversity of tastes and preferences, addressing large segments of consumers. To these features are added numerous advantages, both for customers and for local communities, expressed by: lower costs compared to other forms of vacation; lower seasonality; the originality, the

originality of the travels; the absence of congestion, due to the reduced flows of visitors; stimulating the economies of rural areas, by creating new jobs, obtaining income from capitalizing on the surplus of agricultural products, protecting the environment and preserving traditions, etc. (Nistoreanu, 2003).

The agrotourism activity, through its complexity, contributes to the development of the rural space, and this development will determine, in its turn, an increase of the tourist circulation, amplifying the beneficial effects in the local economy. Thus, the development of the accommodation offer leads to: the appearance of a quality built framework, which will lead to the improvement of the architectural aspect of the village; mutations in the conception of those who will build, being accepted the assistance of an architect in order to build a functional house; increasing the comfort of buildings.

Thus, specific economic activities are developed regarding: the processing of some raw materials from own production (meat, milk, etc.); modernization of local infrastructure; increasing the level of culture and civilization of the inhabitants; harmonization of the conservation interests of the society (long term) with the economic interests (short term) of the local population.

6. The forms of agrotourism and its main purpose in economics

The concept of agrotourism is limited to the household, farm or farm. It therefore consists in organizing the activities of receiving tourists and all tourist services at the level of the agricultural farm. For this reason, in general, agrotourism is often considered as a complementary agricultural activity organically integrated in the economy of the agricultural holding. If, the concept of rural tourism concerns, as we saw above, the organization of tourist activity within the rural community, an area, a region, micro-regions or basin in the rural area, agrotourism treats the tourist phenomenon only inside the farm.

Agrotourism is stricter in terms of holiday conditions; In addition, it takes into account aspects related to the economic effects on peasant households and rural localities as a whole.

Agrotourism is defined in relation to the specialized segments as follows (Bran, Simon and Dinu, 1997):

- accommodation - activity able to capitalize on the existing accommodation surplus in the peasant household, specially prepared and arranged for the reception of guests;
- peasant household activities - set of goods and services offered by the peasant household for consumption by people who, for a certain period come to rural areas for relaxation, rest and leisure, therapeutic cures, transactions and business, introduction to the art of traditional crafts, for studies and documentation, etc .;
- local economy - practical activity, which is an intrinsic side of the local economy;

Whether it is agrotourism or rural tourism, the content of the activity is limited to the coordinates:

- rural space - with aspects related to the settlement in terms of size, population density, social structure, land use, but also the means of accommodation: type, comfort, position;
- inhabitants - the population as a keeper of traditions, customs, but also as owners of land, accommodation equipment and even as a service provider (space and population give content, in the opinion of some specialists, to the concept of rurality);
- products - on the one hand, the agri-food products consumed by tourists on the occasion of their stay in the peasant household and, on the other hand, the tourist products - the attractions that motivate the movement of tourists.

Agrotourism is a combination of agricultural activities with tourist services inside the farm, which can be „... a complementary solution to directly support the development of agriculture, with positive effects both economic and social” (Giurgiu, 2013). “The system is verified worldwide and has led to some of the most favorable results, with some countries achieving complex and important benefits through careful organization and specific equipment” (Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Spain, France, etc.).

The agrotourism farm or farm provides tourists with „agrotourism products” that can be material goods or services. These may include: accommodation on the farm, food in the form of prepared food (meals served on the farm) or agri-food products of the farm sold to tourists, which can be consumed on site or off the farm, farm knowledge programs, activities agricultural and / or participation of tourists hosted in such activities, camping, knowledge of life and family problems, which leads, in the end, to the establishment of relations between urban and rural involving each other in the lives of others; knowledge of cultural values, traditions preserved and preserved in the families of farmers, etc.

Unlike other forms of rural tourism and holidaying in the country, agrotourism includes only the activities through which the family that receives tourists obtains income from them, and not only from the activities of accommodation and feeding, but also from agricultural activities. . Of course, sometimes it can be other primary activities than agriculture such as fishing and logging.

Another defining element that distinguishes agrotourism from other forms of tourism is the number of accommodation places. The limits beyond which it becomes a „commercial hotel enterprise” are very variable, being between six and ten rooms, even up to twenty rooms. In the Romanian legislation, the maximum limit is established at 8 rooms for agritourism pensions and at 15 rooms (maximum 40 places) for rural pensions. In addition, there may be bungalows (cottages with two or more accommodations and campsites).

7. Forms of internal financing of rural tourism and agrotourism in Romania

In order to develop the cultural-tourist business, it is important to invest in it. This means that we need access to finance. Unfortunately, possible external sources of funding - sponsors, donors, creditors or investors - are often skeptical, especially for smaller businesses. This can allow us to rely on funding resources to invest in our business.

a) Own income

The results received are an easy source of internal funding to use because they are liquid assets. The result earned is the part of the net income that you kept in your business and that was not paid. In a small business, withheld income is usually paid to landlords, who often do not make a budgeted salary. Instead of paying the proceeds, you can reinvest them in your cultural tourism project.

b) Current assets

Current assets consist of cash or anything else that can be easily converted into cash. For example, if your business owns shares in other companies, you can sell them and use the revenue as a source of financing. However, you need to be careful not to reduce your current assets to levels lower than your current debt, as this can prevent you from paying your debts.

c) Fixed assets

Fixed assets are those that cannot be easily converted into cash. Typically, these assets include equipment, buildings and other property. Because these assets need time to convert into cash, they cannot be invoked for short-term access to finance. If you have time, however, you could sell, for example, certain equipment or even properties to invest in your business.

d) Personal savings

Personal savings are the backbone of many small tourism businesses. If your business does not have the assets to finance your project, you can still have personal funds that you can bring into the business. This provides an alternative to looking for external lenders or loans and allows you to stay in control of your business.

e) Free resources

Have you ever considered the free resources that are available to you? They can be considered as internal funding, although, at first glance, they may not seem like funding. Voluntary contributions from supporters, networks and free information on any relevant issues could be such resources. E.g. the chambers of commerce offer many free support measures, which are resources that you have access to for free - you just have to access them!

8. Advantages of internal financing

Internal financing vs. Bank financing

When you use company funds, you do not have to pay interest to the bank. You also do not have to go through the application process, which can be costly if you have to pay someone to prepare profit and loss statements, balance sheets and other documents required by the bank.

Internal financing vs. Stock for sale

One way to raise money for your business projects is to sell shares to investors. This gives them some ownership of your business. The use of internal funds offers the advantage of maintaining control in the hands of the company's founders.

Internal financing vs. Government subsidies

Especially in the tourism sector, your business may benefit from government subsidies in certain circumstances. However, the application process can be long and expensive. The costs come from preparing the documentation for these grants. You must gain the approval of the granting agency and this may involve several people and committees. With internal funding, you can start your project immediately, without the need for approval other than management.

Internal financing vs. Sale of assets

Some businesses are trying to finance new expenses by selling assets. This lowers the value of the company and can trigger transaction costs as well as taxes. Internal financing keeps all the company's assets and does not involve additional expenses beyond the cost of the project itself.

9. Financing innovation and new entrepreneurial initiatives in the field of cultural tourism

In the early stages of an idea or product development process, your business is not yet economically viable or, we could say, not profitable. You are in a loss zone. In addition to your own capital, this phase is usually funded by friends and family who decide, based on private information, whether or not to invest in your idea or project. Public support will usually consist of , in various implementation grants, including interest rate subsidies, subsidies or tax incentives.

Asset-based financing

Asset-based funds include leasing, asset-based lending, factoring and financing of purchase orders. Asset-based loans are any type of asset-backed loan. This means that if the loan is not repaid, the asset is taken. In this sense, the mortgage is an example of an asset-based loan. However, the term is often used to describe loans to large enterprises and companies that use assets that are not normally used in other loans.

Typically, these loans are related to inventory, accounts receivable, machinery and equipment. Factoring is a financial transaction in which a business sells its accounts receivable (ie invoices) to a third party (called a factor) offering a discount or discount.

Purchase order-based financing is a financing option if your business needs cash to honor customer orders. Especially in tourism there are regular problems with cash flow. There will be times when there is simply not enough money to cover the costs of running your business.

10. Alternative financing

Alternative borrowing mechanisms (e.g., crowdfunding, securitized debt, corporate or secured bonds) may have potential for your cultural tourism business. However, very often these innovative and alternative methods of financing remain underdeveloped due, in part, to bureaucratic and regulatory constraints, but also due to a lack of knowledge and understanding.

The two most interesting mechanisms are peer-to-peer financing and equity financing. These are innovative financing approaches that can provide your business with a simple and inexpensive way to raise capital from public investors. These internet-based models provide an alternative source of funding for you, especially if you do not have quick access to funding through traditional means.

Peer-to-peer lending (also known as „crowd-lending”) is a form of crowdfunding debt. It is suitable for people who want loans from people who are willing to finance these loans. Correspondence is concluded through an intermediary - a peer-to-peer lending service, usually offered online. Borrowers list the details of their request (amount requested and intended use) on a

peer-to-peer lending site. Lenders browse the site to decide which loans to invest in.

Equity crowdfunding provides a means for „crowd” investors (or those who invest publicly) to invest in a project or firm in exchange for shares. You can offer „benefits” or rewards (such as free vacation nights or other discounts) in return for your investment. Mention the amount you want to buy from investors.

Once this funding is used, any surplus (minus taxes) becomes available to your company for its use.

Crowdfunding is usually facilitated through an online crowdfunding intermediary and is most commonly used by newer companies in the earlier stages of their development. Legislative changes represent the opening of opportunities for projects to raise funds from many investors, each contributing to a small amount of financing, while reducing transaction costs, as these investments are made online and by bank transfer. Another advantage of these financing techniques is that they allow the borrower to raise funds in a shorter period than bank loans.

Although not yet used in tourism, these models offer considerable potential as a source of capital for your cultural tourism business. This innovative financing technique creates a network of investors and spreads financial risk. At the same time, these approaches also serve the dual purpose of providing funding and supporting local development: people invest in the projects they care about and help local businesses create jobs.

11. European funds, the method of financing rural tourism and agrotourism

A) The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is an initiative that helps to overcome the current investment deficit in the EU by mobilizing private funding for strategic investments. EFSI can support, among other things:

- Strategic infrastructure, including digitization, transport and energy
- Education, research, development and innovation
- Extending renewable energy and resource efficiency
- Support for small businesses

B) The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is one of the five Structural and Investment Funds. The ERDF aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. It can provide essential support for improving the competitiveness and quality of tourism at regional and local level, especially in declining areas. (industrial / rural) or those that are undergoing urban regeneration.

ERDF support has 11 thematic objectives and investment priorities, in line with Europe 2020 policy priorities. The most relevant for the tourism sector are probably:

- Research and innovation
- Information and communication technologies
- Competitiveness of small and medium enterprises
- Environmental protection and resource efficiency
- Education, skills and lifelong learning

C) The Cohesion Fund (CF) is one of the five European Structural and Investment Funds. To reduce economic and social disparities and promote sustainable development, the Cohesion Fund targets Member States whose gross national income (GNI) per capita is less than 90% of the EU average.

D) The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) aims, inter alia, to promote economic development in rural areas. Depending on the needs and options of each Member State, support may be granted for:

- development of non-agricultural SMEs in rural areas and employment in sustainable and responsible tourism
- restoration / modernization of the cultural and natural heritage of villages and rural landscapes.

12. Conclusions

Rural tourism and agrotourism are becoming more and more attractive, as tourists become more mobile and looking for a change from city life. The extent to which they enter country life differs from one visitor to another. Some visitors want to be mere spectators. Others want to be directly involved in environmental protection and conservation projects or in agricultural activities. There are development challenges and promotion challenges that need to be addressed if potential visitors are offered and informed about the appropriate products. Wider publicity of traditional rural events is needed to facilitate visitor planning. In the SWOT analysis, of rural tourism we can take into account:

The strengths of rural tourism and agrotourism can be highlighted by:

- natural factors and mineral resources recommended in the complex spa cure;
- drinking water of special quality and a wide variety of mineral waters;
- the diversity of ecological agri-food products, at very low prices;
- traditional cuisine and regional specialties;
- non-existent or very low pollution in most rural areas;
- the diversity of natural and anthropic tourist resources easily accessible and harmoniously distributed throughout the country;
- the variety of folklore and inherited traditions well preserved and practiced in daily life;
- the existence of a vast network of rural localities partners with European localities;
- the support by the authority of the central public tourism administration of the promotion at the international tourism fairs;
- the existence of the general legislative framework for the constructions, endowments and classification of the tourist material base.

The weak points of rural tourism and agrotourism can be represented by:

- the incipient degradation of the environment and the non-existence of an efficient system of waste collection in rural areas;
- rapid degradation of the rural architectural heritage by depopulating localities and rural communities;
- insufficiently developed tourist information and signaling systems in rural areas;
- lack of the national network of local tourist information and promotion centers;
- the offer of tourist services a little diversified and at another level with the price and quality of the tourist services provided;
- unmotivated gain levels for attracting / retaining the rural population in the country; institutional framework at regional and local level for the development of poorly developed rural tourism.

Opportunities of rural tourism and agrotourism can be presented by:

- rapid and sustainable relaunch of tourism with special attention to the place of tourism in the development of the national economy;
- development and promotion of tourist programs in the field of rural tourism: traditional cuisine with agri-food products of ecological type, pilgrimages, ecotourism, rare fauna and flora, the Danube Delta ecosystem, communities that maintain and practice old ethnofolkloric traditions;
- supporting projects that highlight Romanian cultural, spiritual and traditional objectives and cultural events;
- promoting and introducing parks and nature reserves in ecotourism circuits;
- development of rural tourism in tourist and agrotourism pensions by providing facilities;
- realization of projects that highlight in tourism the elements of the national cultural-historical heritage and of typical rural architecture.

Threats of rural tourism and agrotourism can consist of:

- lack of minimum knowledge of tourism management in the field;
- non-compliance with the principles of sustainable development in the evolution of Romanian tourism;

- postponing the creation of institutional administrative structures for tourism, at regional and local level;
- lack of technical and financial support for tourism promotion, from the state, at least at the level of that of competing neighboring states;
- the existence of urban-household endowments undersized and not adapted to the demands determined by the development of rural tourism.

13. References

- Bran, F., Simon, T., Dinu, M., 1997. *Rural tourism - the European model*. Bucharest: Economic Publishing House.
- Dernoï, L.A., 1983. *Current Situation of Rural Tourism in Europe*. Report No. 2
- Drăghici, M.I., 2010. *Research on the development of agrotourism along the Danube in the South-Muntenia Region*. Abstract of the doctoral thesis, USAMV, Bucharest
- Giurgiu, C., 2013. *Marketing techniques in rural development Case study - Călățele Area, Cluj County*. Doctoral thesis, Abstract, www.usamvcluj.ro/files/teze/2013/teleru.pdf
- Gogonea, M.R., 2005. *Statistical methods, Applied in the analysis of rural tourism*. Doctoral thesis, The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies.
- Iarca (Stanescu), D.M., 2007. *Research in the field of estimating the quality and efficiency of tourism services*, Doctoral thesis, The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies.
- Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., Saunders, J., Wong, V., 1998. *Marketing Principles*. Bucharest: Teora Publishing House.
- OECD, 1994. *Tourism Policy and International Tourism in OECD Countries, 1991-1992. Special Feature: Tourism Strategies and Rural Development*. Paris.
- Nistoreanu, P, 2003. *Ecotourism and rural tourism*. Bucharest: ASE Publishing House.
- Palmer, A, 1994. *Principles of Marketing Services*. London: Mc. Graw-Hill Book Co.
- Păunescu, D., 1986. Tourism and leisure. "News in tourism" Magazine, no. 1/1986
- Turcu, D., Weisy, J., 2008. *Economics of Tourism*. Timișoara: Eurostampa Publishing House.